

REMARKS

Pending in the application are claims 1-13, of which claims 1 and 5 are independent. The following comments address all stated grounds for rejection and place the presently pending claims, as identified above, in condition for allowance.

Objections to Drawings

The drawings are objected to because of failing to designate Figs. 17-20 by a legend "Prior Art." In response to the objections, Applicants amend Figs. 17-20 to add a legend "Prior Art." In light of the amendment to the drawings, Applicants submit that the drawings are in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,649,097 to Sasaki *et al.* ("Sasaki") Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the following reasons.

In the Office Action, the Examiner states that "[t]he cited reference teaches the claimed method of molding a gasket or seal onto a carbon plate or separator, the steps comprising providing a separator plate, forming *a hole in the plate*, positioning the plate within a mold cavity between an upper mold and a lower mold such that *the through hole* is between an upper and lower grooved surface of the molds, and the claimed *seal bridge* is readable on the upper and lower grooves connected by the through holes in the plate." However, claim 1 does not recite the *through hole* and the *seal bridge*. The through hole and the seal bridge are recited in claims 7 and 12.

Claim 1 recites a method for fabricating a seal-integrated separator for a fuel cell wherein the seal-integrated separator includes a separator body having a communication port, and seals which are integrated on both sides of the separator body. In fabricating a seal-integrated separator, *melted seal material is injected to form the seals into each of the grooves in the upper mold and the lower mold through separate gates respectively formed in said upper and lower molds*.

Applicants submit that the cited reference fails to disclose each and every element of claim 1. The cited reference fails to teach that *melted seal material is injected to form the*

seals into each of the grooves in the upper mold and the lower mold through separate gates respectively formed in the upper and lower molds, as recited in claim 1. Sasaki discloses in Figs. 4-6 that a porous plain sheet (40) is provided with grooves (40a, 40b) on both sides of the sheet (40), respectively, which are connected to each other via a hole (40c), and sealing material is supplied into the groove (40a), then supplied into the groove (40b) via the hole (40c) to form gaskets (7, 8). The Sasaki reference does not disclose separate gates respectively formed in the upper and lower molds.

In light of the aforementioned arguments, Applicants submit that the Examiner fails to establish a *prima facie* case of anticipation to reject claim 1. Applicants therefore request the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claim 1 and pass claim 1 to allowance.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 2 and 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Sasaki reference in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,319,625 to Gemberling. (“Gemberling”) Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the following reasons.

Claim 2 and 3 depend on claim 1 and add separate and patentable limitations to claim 1. For example, claim 2 recites that the gate formed in one of the molds communicates with the gate formed in the other mold via mating surfaces of the molds by a runner branching from the gate formed in the other mold.

Applicants submit that the cited references, in combination, fail to teach or suggest all of the limitations of the claimed invention. The cited references fail to teach that *melted seal material is injected to form the seals into each of the grooves in the upper mold and the lower mold through separate gates respectively formed in the upper and lower molds*, as recited in claim 1. The Gemberling reference teaches a plurality of injection gates (54a-54d) in Figs. 4 and 5. However, the plurality of gates taught in Gemberling are not separate gates respectively formed in the upper and lower molds.

In light of the aforementioned arguments, Applicants submit that the cited references fail to teach or suggest all of the limitations of claim 1. Claims 2 and 3, which depend on the claim 1, are not rendered obvious over the cited references. Applicants therefore submit that claims 2 and 3 are in condition for allowance.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 4 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the Sasaki reference in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,619,458 to Engelhardt. (“Gemberling”) Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the following reasons.

Claim 4

Claim 4 depends on claim 1 and adds to claim 1 a separate and patentable limitation that the gate is connected to a portion of the groove, the portion not forming a sealing surface of the seal. The Engelhardt is cited to provide teachings for the limitation added in claim 4.

Applicants submit that the Engelhardt references also fails to teach or suggest that *melted seal material is injected to form the seals into each of the grooves in the upper mold and the lower mold through separate gates respectively formed in said upper and lower molds*, as recited in claim 1. The Engelhardt reference teaches cylinders (11, 12) from which elastomer moves into the space (7) in Fig. 3. However, the cylinders taught in Gemberling are not separate gates respectively formed in the upper and lower molds.

In light of the aforementioned arguments, Applicants submit that the cited references fail to teach or suggest all of the limitations of claim 1. Claim 4, which depends on the claim 1, is not rendered obvious over the cited references. Applicants therefore submit that claim 4 is in condition for allowance.

Claims 5-9

Claim 5 recites a method for fabricating a seal-integrated separator for a fuel cell wherein the seal-integrated separator includes a separator body, and *dual seals* which are integrated on both sides of the separator body. In fabricating a seal-integrated separator, *melted seal material is injected to form the seals into each of the grooves in the upper mold and the lower mold through gates respectively formed in the upper and lower molds*. Claims 6-13 depends upon claim 5 and add separate and patentable limitations to claim 5.

In light of the same arguments set forth above, Applicants submit that the cited references, in combination, fail to teach that *melted seal material is injected to form the seals into each of the grooves in the upper mold and the lower mold through separate gates*

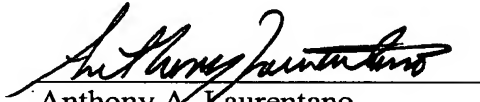
respectively formed in said upper and lower molds, as recited in claim 5. Claims 6-13, which depend on the claim 5, are not rendered obvious over the cited references. Applicants therefore submit that claims 5-13 are in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant contends that claims 1-13 are in condition for allowance. If there are any remaining issues, an opportunity for an interview is requested prior to the issuance of another Office Action. If the above amendments are not deemed to place this case in condition for allowance, the Examiner is urged to call Applicant's representative at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

LAHIVE & COCKFIELD, LLP



Anthony A. Laurentano
Registration No. 38,220
Attorney for Applicant

28 State Street
Boston, MA 02109
(617) 227-7400
(617) 742-4214
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